



ExploreGeorgia.org

Monthly Update – April/May 2011 The Georgia Coast Travel Region

Kudos

- Savannah is included in Trip Advisors Top 25 Destinations in the United States!
http://www.tripadvisor.com/TCDestinations-g191-cTop25-United_States.html#
- TRAVEL + LEISURE READERS NAMES SAVANNAH ONE OF THE BEST CITIES FOR PEOPLE WATCHING - [Click here](#) for the full article.
- **THE WESTIN SAVANNAH HARBOR GOLF RESORT & SPA PROVES TO BE ONE OF THE GREENEST HOTELS IN THE US** - Washington, D.C. based non-profit **Green Seal**, the premier independent ecolabel in the **United States**, is excited to announce **The Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa** has been awarded **Green Seal™ Silver** level certification. For more information, [click here](#)
- **b. Matthew's Eatery** in Savannah has been included in Southern Living's new book, *Southern Living Off the Eaten Path*.
- CAPT. ANDY HILL OF EAGLE ISLAND, GA EARNS IFWTWA AWARD OF EXCELLENCE IN HOSPITALITY - The **International Food, Wine & Travel Writers Association's (IFWTWA) Excellence Awards** program recognizes the world's finest travel and tourism industry professionals as experienced by the organization's journalist members. **Captain Andy Hill** earned IFWTWA's Award of Excellence in Hospitality for his outstanding inn and exemplary guest services at his private island lodge at Eagle Island, Georgia. Click here for more information about Captain Andy Hill and Eagle Island.
www.PrivateIslandsOfGeorgia.com
- Wiley's Championship BBQ – Wiley's Pepper Sauce has been named a 2011 [Flavor of Georgia](#) Finalist!

Coast Mentions in the Media

- **April - Meetings South Magazine - Georgia: The Sweet and Savory South** – 700 Kitchen Cooking school, The Lady Jane Shrimp Boat, and the Jekyll Island Club Hotel are mentioned - Here is the link to the online version of the story:
<http://www.meetingsfocus.com/Topics/ArticleDetails/tabid/162/ArticleID/15544/Default.aspx>
And this link takes you to the full digital edition of the magazine:
<http://digitalsouth.meetingsfocus.com/meetingsfocussouth/201104#pg1>
- **April - Florida Times-Union - St. Marys adds film museum to its history row** -
<http://jacksonville.com/news/georgia/2011-04-15/story/st-marys-adds-film-museum-its-history-row>
- **April – Gayot.com** – Lots on St. Simons Island - King and Prince featured -
<http://www.gayot.com/travel/hotels/king-and-prince-beach-golf-resort-georgia.html>
- **April – Anatomy of a Dinner Party** – Lots on St. Simons Island – King and Prince featured - Four part story - [Day One](#), [Day Two](#), [Day Three Part I](#), [Day Three Part II](#)
- **April – TangoDiva.com – King and Prince** - <http://www.tangodiva.com/blog/2011/04/20/st-simons-island-discoveries-coastal-georgia/>

- **April - Wicked Local Marblehead - Taste of Travel: Reigned in by the King and Prince Resort - [Taste of Travel: Reigned in by the King and Prince Resort - Marblehead, MA - Marblehead Reporter](#)**
- **April – My Skin Concierge - [The Royal Treatment Cottage at The King and Prince Beach & Golf Resort](#) - <http://myskinconcierge.blogspot.com/2011/04/royal-treatment-cottage-at-king-and.html>**
- **April – My Skin Concierge - [Treasures Found on St. Simons Island – The King and Prince Resort](#) - <http://myskinconcierge.blogspot.com/2011/04/treasures-found-on-st-simons-island.html#links>**
- **April – AskMissA.com - The King and Prince Beach & Golf Resort on St. Simons Island <http://myskinconcierge.blogspot.com/2011/04/royal-treatment-cottage-at-king-and.html>**
- **April - USA Today - Coastal residents aim to preserve rich African culture <http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2011-04-22-gullah-geechee-south-carolina.htm>**
- **April – CNN.com – Why your trusty GPS sometimes fails you - Blue Heron mentioned - <http://www.cnn.com/2011/TRAVEL/04/22/travel.gps.tributes/>**
- **April –Examiner.com – Great Hoosier Getaway – three part story on the King and Prince - <http://www.examiner.com/best-value-travel-in-indianapolis/king-and-prince-resort-review-great-hoosier-getaway-part-1-review>
<http://www.examiner.com/best-value-travel-in-indianapolis/king-and-prince-resort-review-great-hoosier-getaway-part-2-review>
<http://www.examiner.com/best-value-travel-in-indianapolis/king-and-prince-resort-review-great-hoosier-getaway-part-3-review>**
- **April – AJC – Waycross Museums Spotlited in New Book - <http://www.ajc.com/lifestyle/waycross-museums-spotlighted-in-918848.html>**
- **April – Encore Atlanta – Going Coastal – Saltwater Cowboy and others mentioned - <http://encoreatlanta.com/lifestyle/2011/going-coastal.html>**
- **May – Miami Herald.com - Island adventures: Exploring coastal Georgia – blue Heron and others mentioned - <http://www.miamiherald.com/2011/05/01/2186832/island-adventures-exploring-coastal.html>**
- **May – The New Tribune - Tacoma, Washington - The Frugal Traveler: How to go birding without going broke – Blue Heron Inn mentioned - <http://www.thenewtribune.com/2011/04/25/1639254/the-frugal-traveler-how-to-go.html#ixzz1LVKgc2kG>**

FAMS and Press Trips

- **March 14-19 –Weissenborn and Jonen – On Assignment for Koelner Stadtanzeiger, taz, Die Welt and major regional newspapers such WAZ and Augsburg Allgemeine, Spiegel Online, and for the news agency DAPD**
- **March 25th – Julie Katz – Owner TourMappers Receptive Services**
- **March 30th – Uwe Stutterheim - Raiffeisen Vertriebs (RV Reisen)**
- **April 1st and 2nd – Axel Pinck – On Assignment for *DuMont Travel Guide***
- **April 3rd -5th – Lufthansa Representatives**
- **May 6-12 – Lazelle Jones – On Assignment for RV America and Truck Trend Magazine.**

- **May 17-20 – Petti Fong** – On Assignment for The Toronto Star
- **June 5-8 – Mary Jo Plouf** – On Assignment for Travelroads.com, 55-alive, Retirementhomes.com and Travellady.com

News from the Coast

- Welcome Angela Wigger to Team Georgia Coast. Angela is the new Director of Tourism with the St. Marys Convention & Visitors Bureau/St. Marys Welcome Center.
- We would like to welcome **Chef Erika Lipe** to Team Georgia Coast - Chef Erika is the new chef at Saltwater Cowboy on St. Simons Island. You can keep up with all that is new with Chef Erika by following her on twitter @saltwaterchef.

Media Opportunities and Other Interesting Stuff

- **TRAVEL LEADERS REVEALS: MAJORITY WOULD SPEND TAX REFUND ON TRAVEL** - As United States taxpayers ready for "tax day," Travel Leaders' latest survey reveals that over 57% of those polled who are receiving a tax refund will use at least part of that money for leisure travel this year. Also, 83% of individuals polled in Travel Leaders' nationwide consumer travel survey indicated that they will spend the same or more on leisure trips in 2011 as compared to last year. This is the third consecutive year in which Travel Leaders has conducted an online consumer survey - which complements its long history of providing detailed travel trends based on bookings and data gathered from hundreds of its travel experts from across the country. This year's survey was conducted March 10 - April 10, 2011, and includes responses from 953 consumers throughout the U.S.
- **EXAMINING CURRENT INDUSTRY TRENDS** - As we approach another summer travel season, there is guarded optimism that the worst is truly over and that we might actually see solid travel performance in the months ahead. However, as has become all too common, some caution flags line our path, according to **Dr. Suzanne Cook**. For the full research review, [click here](#).
- **HOTELS TEST FACEBOOK'S CLOUT WITH TRAVELERS** - Have you booked a hotel room via a hotel's **Facebook** page yet? If not, you might soon. Facebook is gaining clout with hotels as an influencer of travelers - and so more hotels are adding booking options to their Facebook pages, HotelNewsNow.com reports. [Click here](#) to read the complete *USA Today* article.
- **FACE-OFF: WEBSITES THAT HELP TRAVELERS TAP LOCALS FOR TIPS** - So you've consulted guidebooks, travel websites and friends about your vacation destination. But now you want some local, insider information to guarantee a truly authentic experience - the Holy Grail of travel. The answer - literally - may come from local recommendation websites. **Localyte**, **Travellr** and **VirtualTourist** are among the free sites using the increasingly popular question-and-answer format to bring you on-the-ground, local travel tips. [Click here](#) to read the complete *USA Today* article.

Grants

- **GDEcD now has a website devoted to its grant programs.** Please visit the following link for all grant info: <http://www.georgia.org/Georgialndustries/Tourism/Programs/Pages/Grants.aspx>
- The Division of Public Programs at the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities funds humanities projects that are intended for broad public audiences at museums, libraries, historic sites and other historical and cultural organizations. New application guidelines are now posted on the NEH website for its **America's Historical and Cultural Organizations grant competition. The next deadline is August 17.** Other grant information is also available at the website. <http://www.neh.gov/>
- Administered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, **Preservation Services Fund Grants** are awarded to nonprofit organizations and public agencies for preservation planning and education efforts. Grant awards range from \$500 to \$5,000.

For more information, contact the Southern Office at 843-722-8552 or soro@nthp.org or visit the [National Trust website](#). Application deadlines are **February 1, June 1 and October 1** each year.

International News

- **INTERNATIONAL VISITATION UP THREE PERCENT IN JANUARY 2011; SPENDING AT \$11.7 BILLION FOR THE MONTH** - The U.S. Department of Commerce said on April 20 that 4.2 million international visitors traveled to the United States in January 2011, a three percent increase over January 2010. January 2011 registered the 16th straight month of increases in total U.S. visits. International visitors spent \$11.7 billion in January 2011, 10 percent more than in January 2010. January 2011 marks the 13th consecutive month of growth in U.S. travel and tourism-related exports. For the full report from the Office of Travel & Tourism Industries (OTTI), [click here](#).

From The State

- **The Georgia Tourism Division launched our biggest Facebook promotion to date – 80 Days of Georgia Giveaways.** Starting May 2nd and running through August 23, 2011, Prizes range from tickets to major attractions to a two-night stay at the Mansion on Forsyth Park in Savannah and a fabulous prize package to the King and Prince on St. Simons Island.
 - More than \$25,000 in prizes
 - 100+ prizes
 - 80 winners
 - Daily weekday drawings
 - Enter by Liking us on the Explore Georgia Facebook page or Following us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/GeorgiaTourism
 - More information can be found at www.80daysofga.com
 - Here is the link to the Explore Georgia Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ExploreGeorgia and click on 80 Days of GA
- **NATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM WEEK IS SET TO TAKE PLACE MAY 7-15, 2011** - National Travel and Tourism Week is a collective effort taking place across the United States to celebrate the benefits created by travel and tourism industry. "Tourism is a powerful jobs and economic development generator in almost every community in Georgia," said Kevin Langston, Deputy Commissioner for Tourism for the Georgia Department of Economic Development. "National Tourism Week is a great opportunity to draw attention to the importance of the tourism industry to both visitors and Georgians." **The Georgia Department of Economic Development will kick off National Tourism Week at the Savannah Visitors Information Center's Georgia On My Mind Day on Friday, May 6 from 11 am to 2 pm.** Events will also take place at the Plains Visitors Information Center on May 7 and at the Kingsland Visitors Information Center on May 13. For more information and tools that you can use to help celebrate National Tourism week in your community, visit www.marketgeorgia.org. We encourage you to post all of your National Tourism Week events.
- **GEORGIA TOURISM DIVISION HOSTS GENUINE GEORGIA EVENT AT SOUTHERN LIVING HEADQUARTERS** - The Georgia Tourism Division partnered with the state's nine regional travel associations to host a Georgia Luncheon at the Southern Progress headquarters (the parent company of Southern Living, Coastal Living and Cooking Light) on Wednesday, April 20. "The event was a smashing success, and it was due in no small part to the active participation of our travel regions. The editors and staff were engaged, seemed sincere in their interest in learning about our great state (and in providing editorial coverage to them), and I they also had a lot of fun, said" said Kevin Langston, Deputy Commissioner for Tourism for the Georgia Department of Economic Development. They require a certain level of advertising support in the magazines before they allow destinations the opportunity to do this type of event. The state's tourism ad buys increased significantly this year - largely because of our marketing grant and co-op programs. By combining our assets - it allows us new opportunities to market Georgia to consumers through special sections, multi-page spreads, special events, interactive opportunities and more. – **You were represented at this show by Missy Brandt of the**

Village Inn & Pub on St. Simons Island and Carey Ferrara, Regional Tourism Rep, GDEcD.

- **GDEcD' s MONTHLY REPORTS**

You can now find monthly reports from GDEcD's international representatives in the UK and Germany at www.georgia.org/GeorgialIndustries/Tourism/Pages/RegionalandInternationalReports.aspx in the monthly regional reports section. My past reports are also available here.

- **Peach Byte!** – GDEcD's official Georgia Tourism Monthly E-Newsletter available to everyone. If you have not yet signed up to receive Peach Byte, please send an email to peachbyte@georgia.org requesting that your e-mail address be added. If you would like to see past editions of Peach Byte, visit: <http://www.georgia.org/GeorgialIndustries/Tourism/Pages/NewsEvents.aspx>

- **Market Georgia Tourism is an excellent resource for tourism professionals.** You will find industry research, industry presentations, grant information, excellent contact information and more...information is added weekly: <http://www.georgia.org/GeorgialIndustries/Tourism/Pages/default.aspx>

GDEcD RESEARCH UPDATE

- Key Georgia Tourism Indicators are available under the Tourism Industry and Tourism Research section on Georgia.org. Information is updated monthly, so you have access to update-to-date information including data made available by Longwood. To access this information, [click here](#). Please contact **Nerissa Serrano** if you need assistance via email at nserrano@georgia.org.

Georgia Hotel Data:

March 2011:

- Hotel/motel **occupancy** increased 7.9% statewide in March 2011 from March 2010
- March 2011 **room rates (ADR)** in Georgia were down -1.5% from last March
- Statewide, **RevPAR** was up 6.2%
- Georgia **room revenues** increased 6.6%
- **Room Demand** increased 8.2%
- **Room Supply** increased by 0.3% in the state

Year-to-date (YTD):

- Hotel/motel **occupancy** is up 5.6% statewide year-to date
- YTD **room rates (ADR)** in Georgia are down -1%
- Statewide, **RevPAR** is up 4.5% year-to-date
- Georgia **room revenues** are up 3.9% year-to date
- **Room Demand** is up 6%

Room Supply is up 0.4% in the state year-to-date

GDEcD SALES TEAM UPDATE

DOMESTIC:

- **Pam Kruseck attended the OMCA/ABA Tour Operator Summit in Verona, NY** from March 30 - 31, 2011. For the first time ever, the American Bus Association (ABA) and the Ontario Motor Coach Association (OMCA) are hosted a joint tour operator summit. Pam met with 30 Tour Operators from throughout the Northeast.
- **Visitors Information Specialist's Pam Cain and Pat Pierson attended the Southern Women's Show in Nashville** from April 14 - 17, 2011. 30,840 consumers attended during the 4-day show. The Georgia Tourism division had three brochure co-op participants. In addition, Atlanta, Savannah and Georgia's State Parks were the top destinations of interest by attending consumers.

- **Pam Kruseck and Jonathan Boisjolie conducted a site visit in Columbia County** with Beda Johnson and Shelly Clark to see some of the new attractions, destinations and more in the area.
- **Joseph Walker and Pam Kruseck attended the Georgia Coast Travel Association (GCTA) Membership Meeting** in Brunswick on Friday, April 15, 2011. Joseph spoke about the importance of the international market to Georgia's Coast reflecting on his recent visits to Brazil, China, France, Italy and Germany.
- **IAGTO North American Convention - International Association of Golf Tour Operators** - Monterey, CA - May 18 - 21, 2011
More than 120 golf tour operators have signed up to attend the annual convention. Approximately 30 percent of the operators who will attend the 3rd IAGTO North America Golf Tourism Convention will be from the U.S. and Canada. The other operators are coming from more than 20 other countries. The convention is open to North American suppliers and tourist boards interested in meeting with domestic and international golf tour operators selling North America.
- **Pam Kruseck attended the Community Showcase and Travel Shows at Hunter Army Airfield and Fort Stewart** March 9 - 10, 2011. Attendees included family members of deployed soldiers who are looking for ideas on where to take trips in the coming months. We shared information about destinations in their own backyards - especially with gas prices on the rise!
- **OMCA/ABA Tour Operator Summit** - Verona, NY - March 30 - 31, 2011

INTERNATIONAL:

- **Kevin Langston, Joseph Walker, Pam Kruseck, Jonathan Boisjolie and Stefanie Paupeck will be attending International Pow Wow** in San Francisco, CA from May 22 - 25, 2011. Pow Wow is the largest marketplace for international tour operators and media in the United States. GDEcD will be participating in pre-scheduled appointments with international tour operators, receptive operators and media representatives.
- **Stella Xu and Jonathan Boisjolie attended the Active America China conference** in Las Vegas, NV from April 18-20, 2011. The Georgia Tourism team had 40 successful meetings with top Chinese tour and receptive operators. Stella Xu was one of five DMO representatives to present in a special conference kick-off session for the Chinese delegation.
- **Kevin Langston, Joseph Walker and Wolfgang Streitborger represented Georgia at ITB Berlin** from March 9 - 13, 2011. ITB is Germany's largest tourism convention. Germany is Georgia's second most important market.
- **Joseph Walker hosted training sessions at Marsans in Brazil** from March 1 - 4, 2011 for current sellers of Georgia packages.

Regional Contact Information

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